MAPPING MARIJUANA PROBABILITY GROW SITES: AN OPERATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TOOL*

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ABSTRACT

The "HEMP Data Fusion System " (HDFS) has been developed to predict and display geographic locations of potential marijuana plantation sites in the Los Angeles County's Angeles National Forest, a portion of the designated Southern California "High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area" (HI DTA). To support the mission of eradicating marijuana grow sites, the HDFS integrates Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies with customized commercial software to provide an operational law enforcement system for: 1) Mapping and displaying potential marijuana grow sites; 2) Creating field reconnaissance maps from an on-line electronic map library; 3) Coordinating all field and intelligence information via a relational database; and 4) Documenting field activities with various video tools. Preliminary results from the 1994 field season suggest a significant increase in field reconnaissance coordination, operational efficiency, and case documentation, despite a declining funding environment, The generic HDFS technology is applicable to a variety of other law enforcement problems involving geographic factors and computer automation requirements.